

Troops take historic step into Panjshir Valley

Story by Spc. Kelly Hunt
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan—Emotion reigned through prevalent cheers over the Talkabout radios as the final vehicle in the four-car convoy passed through the main gate guarding the Northern Alliance holy land of the Panjshir Valley Oct. 22.

Some say these soldiers are the first conventional American troops to set foot on the sacred land of Ahmad Shah Masoud's birthplace, the commander of the Northern Alliance, dedicated freedom fighter and leader of the Taliban resistance; the only area that neither the Russians nor the Taliban could touch. But whether that is true or not, this convoy, consisting of troops from the 407th Civil Affairs Battalion and the Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force, made history when the people of Panjshir Valley allowed outsiders to witness the beauty and power of the Northern Alliance's stronghold.

"I am so excited," yelled Staff Sgt. Chelly Fuchs, 407th Civil Affairs Battalion when she



Photo by Spc. Kelly Hunt

Afghan women walk through the Panjshir Valley mountainside Oct. 22 as the first conventional American troops to enter the area stopped to take in the scenery.

saw the first vehicle in the convoy drive pass the armed guard. "This is such a big deal for us ... it's an untouched area for Americans and it's huge."

To CA personnel, this accomplishment is a

miracle.

"We've been trying to get in here for quite some time, (but) every time we came here there

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Brown and Root helps Bagram reap what it sews

Story and photo by Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan—When one hears the term, "you reap what you sew" he tends to think that something negative has taken place or karma has claimed another victim; however, on Bagram Air Base that couldn't be farther from the truth. Here the term means that one must have visited the sewing shop, where Bagram personnel can bring their garments to be stitched, tucked and sewn without any "implications."

The sewing shop is available to all coalition forces and civilian personnel working on Bagram and the services are provided at no cost.

"The service is free, but [users] must provide their own rank,

unit patch or anything else they want sewn unto their uniform," said Kevin Daniel, laundry and sewing shop attendant.

The shop is operated by Kellogg Brown and Root, which employ local nationals to do the sewing. The facility has three seamsters (one during the morning shift and two during the afternoon shift) and a customer service representative available during its business hours to accommodate customers. The shop is open Monday through Saturday from 0800 to 1630 L and is closed on Sunday.

The shop handles an average 25 to 30 sewing jobs per day and has a turn around time of 12 to 24 hours.

While sewing on rank and unit patches is a major part of the shops work load, the shop does offer other services.

"We do alterations (on civilian clothing only), mend small holes

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



U.S. soldiers gather outside a first-aid station late Tuesday in Tikrit, Iraq, after a U.S. base came under attack.

U.S. intelligence points to mastermind of troop attacks

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The United States believes it has gathered intelligence pointing to the man financing and coordinating attacks against U.S. troops in Iraq, Pentagon sources told *CNN* Wednesday.

Former Iraqi Gen. Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri is suspected of carrying out the attacks, possibly with help from Iraqi regime loyalists and “foreign fighters,” sources said.

Al-Duri is the highest-ranking member of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein’s who is still at large. Saddam is also still missing.

Al-Duri was the Iraqi military’s northern regional commander and a member of Saddam’s inner circle. He is number six on the list of 55 most wanted Iraqis, and the “King of Clubs” in the famous deck of cards.

Pentagon officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the capture of several suspected members of Ansar al-Islam within the past week in northern Iraq provided the intelligence that points toward al-Duri.

Several suspects, including one said to be very close to al-Duri, said the general was the mastermind behind many of the attacks.

Authorities tracking down leads into recent bombings have previously said they suspected remnants of Saddam’s regime, foreign terrorists or the al Qaeda-linked group Ansar al-Islam to be responsible.

Officials said Wednesday that the number of daily attacks against coalition forces is 33, double the figure in early September.



A firefighter drives away from a fire on State Highway 18 near Running Springs, California, on Wednesday.

Firefighter killed in wildfires

JULIAN, Calif. – A firefighter was killed Wednesday in the Southern California wildfires, the first fatality of a firefighter in the blazes that have raged since Saturday.

That death brings the overall, fire-related death toll in the state to 18.

The blazes have destroyed nearly 2,000 homes and scorched more than 600,000 acres. The fires have caused more than \$2 billion in damage, according to the office of California Gov. Gray Davis.

A spokeswoman for the California Department of Forestry said two other firefighters were injured in the incident that killed the person fighting the Cedar fire in San Diego County.

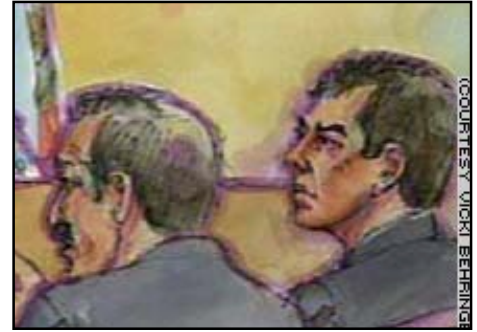
California Gov.-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger, in Washington on a previously scheduled trip seeking economic aid for the state, changed plans because of the fire.

“I’m now looking for federal money for people, for the victims of the fire, so people can rebuild their homes and rebuild their businesses as quickly as possible,” he told reporters.

Winds off the Pacific Ocean Wednesday played havoc on the efforts of firefighters to control the wildfires.

Ocean winds drove the fires toward stands of highly combustible dead timber in communities in San Diego and San Bernardino counties, a fire official said Wednesday. And a sudden change in direction caused firefighters to bring in water-dropping helicopters to manage a blaze on the Los Angeles and Ventura county lines.

Cooler, moist air from the Pacific were expected to drive the fires back toward the desert Wednesday, said Bob Monsen, a California Department of Forestry spokesman.



Scott Peterson, right, with attorney Mark Geragos at Wednesday’s hearing.

Prosecutors begin laying out case against Peterson

MODESTO, Calif. – In the first hearing to reveal evidence in the case against Scott Peterson, an FBI forensics expert reported test results from five pieces of evidence, including a blood sample, hair found on a hairbrush and hair found on pliers in Scott Peterson’s boat.

The initial portion of Wednesday’s hearing focused on technical details of the testing procedure. Constance L. Fisher, the FBI forensics expert, did not explicitly say to whom the hair or blood belonged.

Court papers indicate that prosecutors believe the hair belonged to Laci Peterson.

The formal start of the preliminary hearing was delayed while Fisher testified about a type of evidence known as mitochondrial DNA, or MTDNA, which was used to identify the hair on the pliers.

Mark Geragos, Peterson’s attorney, argued that the evidence should be excluded, saying MTDNA is not as reliable as other forensic methods. Fisher testified that MTDNA is not unique to an individual, but said close family members share the same type.

MTDNA has been allowed as evidence in past California cases and after several hours, the judge said he would allow Fisher to testify on a limited basis.

Peterson is charged with two counts of murder in the deaths of Laci Peterson and their unborn son. The former fertilizer salesman, 31, has pleaded innocent to the charges. He could face the death penalty if convicted.

World safer due to U.S. actions, Bush says

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The world is safer today because Saddam Hussein and the Taliban are gone, President Bush said during a White House press conference Tuesday.

He said the will of the United States cannot be shaken by “suiciders who are willing to drive up to a Red Cross center – a center of international food and aid and comfort – and just kill.”

The president said this is the same terrorist mentality that was behind the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The terrorists expected the United States to “crater in the face of hardship,” Bush said.

The president urged Congress to act quickly to pass the \$87 billion supplemental budget request that includes \$20 billion for aid to Afghanistan and Iraq. He also expressed satisfaction on the unanimous passage of U.N. Security Council resolution 1511 that endorses a multinational U.N. force for Iraq under U.S. command and encourages the nations of the world to assist in reconstruction in Iraq.

“We’re now working with many nations to make sure that Afghanistan and Iraq are never again the source of terror and danger for the rest of the world,” Bush said.

Bush said he is pleased with the financial commitments other countries have made to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet he said that more than two decades of oppression and brutality in Iraq and Afghanistan make reconstruction difficult. “Freedom still has its enemies in both those countries,” he said, and terrorists are taking a look at the progress the coalition is making and targeting examples of that success and freedom.

“Their desperate attacks on innocent civilians will not intimidate us or the brave Iraqis and Afghans who are joining in their own defense and are moving toward self- government,” Bush said. “Coalition forces aided by Afghan and Iraqi police and military are striking the enemy with force and precision.”

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

“Bandits”

1530Z at the MWR building:

Two bank robbers fall in love with the girl they’ve kidnapped.



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Friday</i>
<u>Bagram:</u>	<i>Haze</i> H: 79F L: 43F	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 75F L: 43F
<u>Kandahar:</u>	<i>Dusty</i> H: 86F L: 52F	<i>Clear</i> H: 86F L: 52F
<u>Kabul:</u>	<i>Haze</i> H: 79F L: 43F	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 75F L: 43F
<u>Uzbekistan:</u>	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 86F L: 55F	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 87F L: 48F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Photo by Maj. Matthew L. Garner

Trees display their fall colors along one of the many tributaries feeding the Panjshir River.

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was another piece of criteria,” said Fuchs explaining her astonishment. “We were expecting there to be yet another piece, but we have come through.”

In addition to this land being Masoud’s birthplace, it is also the location of his shrine.

“This is a protected area,” said Fuchs. We need to be extra conscience about the area and the people’s concerns, she said.

“The people that live in Panjshir Valley are very loyal and dedicated people,” Fuchs said. “You have to have a good reason to come here if you’re not a native of Panjshir Valley.”

Though temporarily blinded by the excitement of overcoming the challenge of getting into the area and the amazing landscape of rushing, crystal blue

water surrounded by towering snow-capped mountains, it didn’t take long for the crew to get down to business.

“We’re here to make our point,” said Fuchs. “We have 24 hours to make our point and we only have two and a half hours on the ground, so we need to take advantage of the time we have and make it happen so we can come back here . . . it’s very important.”

Their mission; a Cooperative Medical Assistance planning reconnaissance, school assessments as well as some humanitarian aid assistance. To complete this task, troops went through several villages in the area, locating village elders who could help them help Panjshir Valley.

“We know there’s a need for CA to get up here,” said Fuchs. “All of what we do outside the Panjshir Valley needs to reach all of Afghanistan to include Panjshir Valley.”

All in all, the mission was a success and plans for a CMA mission in the Panjshir Valley are now underway, said CA personnel. Mission complete, with a few amazing emotional perks.

REAP, from Page 1 —

and tears and any other minor repairs our customers have,” said Daniel.

While Daniel says the shop doesn’t handle major repairs and advises customers to direct exchange military issue, he suggests there is no job to small for the shop saying, “We’ve even had people bring in socks to be repaired.”

Customers need not to worry about care of their garments once they leave it in the “hands” of the sewing shop. Seamsters who have worked for a number of years in local tailoring shops and one, Muhammad Iqbal, was an apprentice of a tailor before working at Bagram.

“I’ve been [tailoring] and sewing clothing for five years,” said Iqbal. “I can do anything a customer wants except for the things not allowed by [Kellogg Brown and Root].”

Iqbal noted the things that aren’t allowed are altering desert combat uniforms (DCU) or customizing the uniform in any fashion.

“Although the work is pretty simple, I enjoy what I do here,” said Iqbal.

“We have a quick turn-around time because [the seamsters] are good at the job,” said Daniel.

He offered that it usually takes less than two minutes to sew on rank or unit patches and about five minute to do an entire uniform in-

cluding the hat.

Though the sewing shop is not one of most visible services at Bagram, it’s an essential service nonetheless.

“We’re a valuable part of Bagram, because there is a need for services we provide,” said Daniel. “Whenever there’s a need that void should be filled, plus our price is unbeatable.”



Muhammad Iqbal, seamster at Bagram's sew shop, prepares to sew a name tape onto a customer's desert combat uniform. The services of the sewing shop are free for coalition forces and personnel working on Bagram Air Base.



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)

Malone, Payton set tone as Lakers roll over Mavs



Kobe Bryant rejoined the Lakers bench in time to whisper sweet nothings toward Shaq in the fourth quarter.

LOS ANGELES –

The new-look Los Angeles Lakers didn't need Kobe Bryant to do what they always do against the Dallas Mavericks.

With Gary Payton leading the fast break and Karl Malone providing plenty of everything, the Lakers put aside their squabbles and defeated Dallas at home for the

26th consecutive time — 109-93 Tuesday night.

"Well, they're awesome," Dallas coach Don Nelson said. "Even without Kobe they have enough firepower to dominate the league."

Payton had 21 points and nine assists, and Malone added 15 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists to barely miss the fourth triple-double of his career. Both received standing ovations when they left in the fourth quarter, with Bryant among those lavishing the two newcomers with applause.

Shaquille O'Neal, Derek Fisher and Devean George — three of the holdovers from last season's Lakers — each added 16 points.

"Unbelievable. All that firepower. We've got cannons, rockets, missiles, you name it," Lakers forward Bryon Russell said.

Bryant, engaged in a public feud with O'Neal, sat out because of soreness in his surgically repaired knee and did not join his teammates on the bench until the end of the third quarter. At that point, the Lakers were already receiving a standing ovation, and the crowd cheered even louder as Bryant was shown on the main scoreboard.

Wearing a red T-shirt that clashed with the Lakers' gold jerseys, Bryant sat alongside O'Neal for the start of the fourth quarter and stayed on the bench for the rest of the game. He said he and O'Neal had patched things up.

"We're cool. We talked this morning. He said what he said, I said what I said. We put it behind us," Bryant said. "Shaq and I are going to move on, be teammates and help this team to a fourth title."

It was Bryant's first public appearance at the Staples Center since the Lakers were eliminated during the second round of the playoffs. Bryant stayed in the locker room during the Lakers' two home exhibition games.

Perhaps what made Bryant emerge was watching the way his teammates meshed during the third quarter, their best sequence ending with an over-the-head backdoor pass from Malone to Payton for a reverse layup. Malone had seven points, five rebounds and five assists in the quarter, which ended with the Lakers ahead 86-67.

The Mavericks, who were led by 19 points apiece from Dirk Nowitzki and Antoine Walker, never threatened in the fourth quarter.

Browns' Green arrested on DUI, drug charges



William Green might not be available when the Browns play the Chiefs on Nov. 9.

WESTLAKE, Ohio — Cleveland Browns running back William Green pleaded innocent Wednesday to charges of driving under the influence of alcohol and marijuana possession.

According to a police report, Green was arrested at 6:12 p.m. Monday after he failed a breath test. He had a blood alcohol content of .165 — more than twice Ohio's legal limit of .08.

An officer found a bag of marijuana weighing 3.2 grams in Green's sport utility vehicle.

If convicted on the DUI charge, Green could receive probation or up to a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail. His license also could be suspended from six months to three years.

The marijuana charge is a misdemeanor and carries a \$100 fine.

Green also pleaded innocent before Rocky River Municipal Judge Maureen Gravens to a charge that he drove outside his lane.

Green and his attorney Brian Downey did not comment after the arraignment.

Bryant has neck surgery, lost for season

ATLANTA — Georgia has lost another key player to a season-ending injury.

Cornerback Decory Bryant had neck surgery Sunday morning that will end his season and leaves his NFL future in doubt, the seventh starter or top backup lost to a season-ending injury for the fourth-ranked Bulldogs this season.

Bryant was hurt on a kickoff return in the third quarter of Saturday's 16-13 win over Alabama-Birmingham in Athens. Bryant walked off the field. Though he did not return to the game, the severity of the injury surprised Georgia coaches.

"It does surprise me because of the end result, but that he was tough enough to walk off, no, that doesn't surprise me because he has played tough like that for three years," Georgia assistant coach Willie Martinez said Monday.

Martinez said he visited Bryant on Monday at St. Mary's Hospital in Athens.

"He's going to be fine," Martinez said, adding that he could not release specifics about Bryant's injury "because those are his family's wishes."

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Three American soldiers wounded in ambush

KABUL, Afghanistan (Reuters) – Three American soldiers received minor shrapnel wounds in southeastern Afghanistan when rebel forces ambushed their convoy, the U.S. military said on Wednesday.

The convoy of U.S. and Afghan soldiers was attacked by small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades on Monday morning near Orgun-E in Paktika province, not far from the Pakistani border.

“Coalition forces responded with small arms and mortar fire as well as close air support aircraft,” U.S. military spokesman Col. Rodney Davis told a news conference. “The fighting lasted about two hours until the anti-coalition elements retreated.” Davis said three Americans received minor shrapnel wounds and have already returned to duty after treatment. The rebel forces retreated toward Pakistan, he said.

The Afghan government blames Islamabad for not doing enough to seal its border and close down Taliban and al Qaeda camps operating in its territory.

The ambush at Orgun-E came two days after a six-hour firefight with Taliban and al Qaeda militants further south in the same province on Saturday, in which the Americans said they killed “approximately 18 enemy personnel.”

That clash took place in Gomal district, 44 km south of a U.S. base at Shkin on the Pakistani border, an area where U.S. forces come under attack several times a month and which Davis describes as “the most evil place in Afghanistan.”

Two CIA operatives were also killed in an ambush near Shkin on Saturday, but Davis declined to say if this was part of the same engagement.

He did say, however, that there were signs of increasing activity by Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda network in the Shkin area.

“A good number of the anti-coalition forces we’ve killed recently in the Shkin area were al Qaeda,” he said, adding that they included Chechens, Uzbeks and others.

Davis said most of the rebel forces confronting the 11,500-strong U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan were thought to be Afghans, and members of the ousted Taliban militia.

Afghan officials in Paktika had given conflicting accounts of the recent clashes near Shkin, but Davis said he was only aware of one fight involving coalition forces in the area in the last week.

Top Afghan, Pakistan and U.S. officials visit border posts to discuss disputed frontier

KABUL, Afghanistan (Sabawoon) – Top Afghan, Pakistani and U.S. officials pledged better cooperation in fighting incursions by fugitive Taliban and al Qaeda members during a visit to guard posts along the Afghan-Pakistani frontier, the U.S. military said Wednesday.

Senior military and diplomatic representatives under the so-called Tripartite Commission visited four outposts Saturday along the Af-

ghan-Pakistan border northeast of Jalalabad in Nangahar province, U.S. military spokesman Col. Rodney Davis said.

They used global positioning system devices to confirm points on the frontier, which is largely unmarked and traverses rugged, uninhabited land.

Previously, the commission had visited three other points to confirm locations of Pakistani guard posts on that side of the border. The frontier runs 3,300 kilometers (2,050 miles) from the Himalayas in Pakistan’s northern territories to the desert of Baluchistan in the south.

During their trip, the officials also “agreed to continue to take proactive steps to enhance coordination among Afghan, Pakistan and U.S. security forces in key areas of the border to combat Taliban and al Qaeda infiltration and to deny them sanctuary,” the U.S. military said in a statement.

Pakistan previously supported the Taliban regime but switched sides to back the U.S.-led anti-terror coalition that ousted that extremist movement from power in Afghanistan in late 2001. Afghan President Hamid Karzai’s government has repeatedly accused Pakistan of not going far enough to combat lingering Taliban and al Qaeda forces, who it says are launching attacks into Afghanistan from Pakistani bases.

Last week, Pakistan said it was taking steps to fortify the border near the crossing at Chaman to keep al Qaeda and Taliban from sneaking into the country.

“We have established an American presence, send in the mobile Starbucks.”



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support